***Hellgate High School – Principal Advisory Committee***

**Monthly Meeting**

**Monday, March 9, 2015**

**Conference Room**

**Agenda**

***\*items in italics were submitted after the initial agenda was sent out***

Facilitator: Chip Rinehart Note taker: Laura Elliott Time keeper:

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| **Topic** | ‡**Notes** |
| **Old Business** |  |
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| **New Business** |  |
| Re: Attendance. Can we go back to entering school-related absences as school-related rather than activity arranged? Makes it much easier to look back for grading/attendance purposes. | Principal:  Explained the school absence codes:  B, school related absence (field trip, counselor, CSCT, admin office) does not count as an absence;  K, activity related (band, basketball, cheerleader, BPA) activity and out of building Attendance code, this too is not an absence code;  Q, prearranged (family, student requested absence) for when student is gone for longer than 3 days of school. These must be approved by administrator and do not count for 10 days;  E, not approved prearranged absences and parent requested absences. These do count for 10 days.  Out of school activities (Hockey club, ski team, etc.) qualify as prearranged absences if the form is filled out. If the form is not filled out, it is recorded as an E.  If you are failing because of an absence, a letter is sent home. The school psychologist is working on better protocols for this. We are working toward universality in the building and have gotten much better on being consistent in coding this year. |
| Appreciate the principal visiting with PLC’s, but not to share info that should be for staff meeting. We don’t see the point in giving the same info about trainings and Special Olympics to departments individually; we could easily have a quick staff meeting after school between 3 and 3:40 for information of this type to be disseminated. Understood that info is passed to her and she is told to make sure all staff hears it before our next scheduled Thursday time but it seems like a waste of collaborative time and the principal’s time to repeat the same message over and over. Also, not all staff members are a part of a PLC and then rely on word of mouth to get this information. This seems like mini staff-meetings to many. | Principle:  The process used to determine if information is given at a staff or PLC meeting is twofold. First, she takes the information to the dept. meeting and requests advice from dept. chairs to determine the best place to disseminate the information. She then takes direction from department chairs.  The principal’s main concern when we present things in front of the whole staff is that some people get it and some people don’t. She now shares information in PLC, staff meetings, email, and the Principal’s Pen. Studies have shown when you only provide information once, communication breaks down. She is working hard to improve communication and is hoping that staff focus groups will bring some ideas to light as well as some action items for solutions.  PAC:  10 minutes before a staff meeting from same voice at same time sounds like a good solution.  Part timers might miss after school meetings.  Information given in PLC’s isn’t happening all the time, so is it that big of deal.  There is some info that doesn’t need to be discussed. Maybe budget time for announcements into a staff meeting.  PLC’s vary in number, so it could be more difficult in large PLCs.  It is great that the principal can visit all the PLC’s.  PAC:  Types of info should be disseminated as per item. (Email, video, discussion in plc, etc.) The type of information should guide the principal. |
| If we are not doing MYP this year, why do we have a .5 TOSA MYP Coordinator? | Principal:  The MYP Coordinator is working on several things. She is working on MYP units with instructional coaches in English Literature, Health Enhancement, Science and Common Core.  This question leads to other questions and like staffing and who gets staffed where? Is this a PAC team item?  PAC:  This is a principal decision.  Principal:  Are all of the agenda items appropriate, like staffing questions?  PAC:  It seems like many are complaints.  Principal:  If some are wondering a question and if they don’t feel comfortable bringing these types of questions up to the principal, should PAC answer questions like this?  PAC:  People feel safe when they know what the rules are.  Is this a personnel issue? Class sizes are affected. The question is addressing what she is currently doing, not why was this individual chosen to do it. Can you explain this, so we know what is going on?  Principal:  Why do we have a MYP coordinator? There is a benchmark in the district goals for this position. It is a district position, not a building position. However, the DP coordinator does come out of building funds. |
| Thanks for compiling all of this attendance data. If we are truly a data-driven district, then we need this aggregated data to inform our decisions.  On that note, I believe that we also need to track School Activity absences as those impact the students and our classrooms, as well as the other absences. It would give us a more complete picture of the impact of student absences on classroom performance.  We definitely need to do this. Last Friday I had 3 seniors excused, which would give an attendance impression of 39 present. In reality, I had 14 of 42 present. Teaching was pointless. If we really want an accurate attendance picture, we need to look at all absences. | PAC:  It feels like February is always busy. When students are gone, they are gone regardless of the reason. They are not in school and we can’t teach them when they are not here. Make up work is difficult.  These types of activities used to be done more often on weekends, why is this happening more during the school week?  Are we putting a veneer over absences? Can we start using the data to see what is really going on and if these type of absences are hurting students? Having students being gone makes it 10 times harder on teachers. Is there a way to make it easier?  Principal:  There are two sides of this:   1. When students are not in class they don’t receive same instructional benefit as when they make it up. 2. Kids who are involved in school related activities have higher graduation rates and achievement. Being active is an incentive to keep students in school.   Many teachers are in favor of activities and there are many who are frustrated.  We recently just started tracking this data accurately. Parent excused absences are currently the highest attendance code. We are addressing parent excused absences first.  PAC:  We should look at this and find out if it is a problem for other schools are too.  Principal:  It is. Seeley is considering a four day week for students to participate in activities on Fridays.  The principal was intentional on using the Principal’s Pen to list events and field trips. She knows conversations are happening about this. Including this information in the Pen gives staff evidence of when and where students are gone. She is hoping teachers provide some reasonable solutions to this in their conversations.  PAC:  Can we have discussions of MSHA having games on Saturday instead of Thursday?  Because of time restraints, we are moving on. |
| We need to do a better job of scheduling main school events such as Prom so they do not conflict with student organization competitions.   * I'm concerned about the numerous school-related absences we are experiencing, notably from the music department. While I understand that often, opportunities to apply skills outside the classroom benefit students, the time away from other content areas prevents them from gaining skills they need to be successful in those classes. Many classes at Hellgate have curriculum dependent on labs, teams, direct-instruction, etc., so these many absences hamstring the scope and sequence of the program and the student's ability to be successful. The students are stressed, sick and falling further and further behind. * Would the principal and activities director, in their meetings with the Montana High School Association, be willing to open discussions about the increasing numbers of school days (and instruction) interrupted for adjudication and competition? Many events, once scheduled for Saturdays, now interrupt the school week. While each activity, from band, orchestra, and choir to basketball, debate, and track offer manifold benefits to students, the cumulative effects of moving competitions mid-week is to interrupt other valuable hours of learning. In addition, the constant interruptions of daily instruction interferes with schools' preparations for high-stakes testing and Common Core evaluation. * I would like to visit the amount of time band is able to take students out of school with no loss to band's instructional time. My students are stressed out, sick and failing or barely passing (seniors). I think we've tipped over the beneficial tipping point into dangerous territory for students. It's excessive for many of these students. | I'm not sure that music has a representative on this, but I would like to draw attention to the fact that there are many groups pulling kids from school, not just music.  I only have taken the Hellgate Advanced orchestra out of school 2 days this year.  I think that is comparable to Hosa BPA, speech, APS and Debate etc.  I just hope if you guys have a discussion about attendance, you don't try to insinuate that the problem lies solely with our department. I really try try to keep absences to a minimum.  I don't know if there is a way to relate this, but I think it is important to state.  Hope you have a good Monday. |
| A student's grade was changed from a D- to a NG at Semester 1 w/o my knowledge. Yet other "F" grades were left intact. Was this due to Absences? |  |
| District PLC at the same time as In-building PLC.  This is a real issue and needs to be changed.  For example this next Thursday we are expected to discuss possible schedule changes for Hellgate during this time, yet my dept is expected to be at the district PLC where there is a completely different agenda. Thus if my dept is going to discuss Hellgate’s schedule we are expected to do it on our own time.  I find this to be un professional. If what we do in meetings is important to the whole, then we all need to be given the time to adequately discuss. Like say at a faculty meeting. |  |
| PAC,  The department chairs have requested that I share a power point provided by the instructional coaches to entire staff. This presentation explains the changes which are occurring to the Teaching & Learning Departments process for curriculum review. I do plan to visit with each PLC team and discuss the presentation, but also agree with the department chairs, that this presentation should be heard by all staff so that everyone hears the same presentation at one time.  Couple this request with the previous request by Human Resources, that will have us schedule two Tuesday’s back to back, March 10th  (T & L, there is a deadline for feedback on the 18th) and Human Resources on March 17th. Or I could schedule Human Resources for the next available Tuesday which is April 21st.  Please provide feedback as to which direction you think is most appropriate. | PAC:  We would like to do it sooner than later, so March 17th.  Principal:  You can get information from a colleague for both meetings if you already are scheduled to be somewhere else. |
| |  | | --- | | 1. Hold a school-wide assembly two times per year:  a. Recognize student academic achievement two times per year in an assembly (3.0-3.49; 3.5-3.99; 4.0)  b. Recognize significant academic improvement  c. Recognize exemplary attendance  d. Recognize “Principal Award” winners (see below) | | 2. Create and regularly update a “Student Recognition” tab on your school website | | 3. Find ways to encourage as much staff attendance as possible at graduation ceremony (how might parents and student groups help?) | | 4. Encourage as much participation as possible at each graduation ceremony by all members of the MCPS Board Trustees | | 5. Remove inaccurate “valedictorian” label given to all 4.0 students (if current practice) | | 6. All schools recognize the highest quality, well-rounded students in a similar way (building principals work together to create criteria and consistency) during the graduation ceremony. This is using the Big Sky Medallion concept. All other awards to be recognized at academic assemblies, not at commencement ceremony. | | Principal:  March 22 is the school wide achievement, end of the year assembly. If we are not recognizing everyone, the Principal doesn’t want to do this. Do we want to recognize student achievement during this time too?  PAC:  Yes.  Principal:  We need to bring this together into a 45 minute period.  PAC:  Perhaps there could be a PowerPoint backdrop with the activity and names of participants listed. Perhaps the students could stand to be recognized to save time?  The four assemblies:  Homecoming  Christmas  Diversity  End of year |
| My name is Madeline Madsen and I am a junior at Sentinel High School. Last summer I was involved with Play Ball for Vets; this program acknowledged Veterans with a ticket and some food at an Osprey game. I have since gotten involved with Voices for Vets and I am interested in putting together an assembly on Veterans Day (November 11, Wednesday) at all the local high schools. The federal holiday gives recognition and thanks to our Veterans, but it has never been celebrated in our schools. It’s as if it is a nonevent. I would like to change this by having an all school assembly where we would honor a Veteran and acknowledge the holiday. I imagine the assembly would take approximately 20 minutes. I have attached my preliminary outline of this school assembly. When would be a good time to meet, and who might be a good point person at the school for me to work with? I know its only March, but imagine this would take some time to organize. Thank you for your consideration.  Sincerely,  Madeline Madsen  [madelinepmadsen@gmail.com](mailto:madelinepmadsen@gmail.com)  (406) 552-3713 | Principal:  Assemblies are limited to 4 per year. Are we open to more? Is this an executive decision or a PAC item?  PAC:  This request isn’t for full assembly time.  Worried about if we do this for one, we will have to start doing this for all.  Also, military is present often and where is the peace?  There is no end to good causes…  Principal:  Currently when Hellgate seniors want an assembly for senior projects, they are requested to find a teacher whose curriculum fits the subject of their assembly. These teachers can then allow other teachers to bring students if it fits in their curriculum too. |
| Announcements:                  Please;  1- **either start them right after the bell or don’t read them at all.** Today they were being read 7 minutes into the class period. I was trying to instruct because I had already read them to the students.                  2-**keep them short!!!**  As I understand it second period is two minutes longer than the other classes.  If this is still the case then the announcements need to be kept to within that two minute time frame.  I apologize for grumbling so much but this is getting really annoying. The repetition of all the 4-5 sentence paragraph announcements is causing the students not listen to anything that is being said.  3/6/15: The purpose of First Friday is understood and MBI efforts appreciated, but we need to maintain respect for second period class time. Today’s announcements lasted until 8:53 and the period is scheduled from 8:44-9:35… between MBI announcements, the regular announcements, and a full minute of transition time, the announcements took 9 minutes! Today this truly impacted student learning time in my class and we rushed through important material to compensate.  *Suggestions-  -Maybe alter the announcements on Friday to compensate for MBI announcements?  - No regular announcements on Fridays, only MBI? -Maybe only announce MBI winners only on First Fridays and adjust the schedule to add more time to second period for that purpose?*  *-Hold tighter to the limits of how many lines can be in the announcements per topic? -Have the president ready to start the announcements* ***immediately*** *after Lynn instead of waiting a minute?*  Thanks for considering.  One more IF time... Please do not start Announcements 5 MINUTES AFTER CLASS BEGINS!!!!!!!!! IF YOU DON'T START IMMEDIATELY...DON'T!!!  Admin. needs to get better about making sure announcement on Friday!  Wasting the first 5 mins. of the period is unacceptable.  Can we please make the announcements shorter and pertinent!!!!!!!  I get that graduation is important and so is attendance…  But several paragraphs about “March Madness Attendance” every day? | FYI- the reason the announcements were late Friday was because the bells didn’t ring in the math hall so the class savannah was in didn’t get let out on time.  FYI;  announcements today 4 minutes 23 seconds  PAC:  Great ideas!  Could someone from the office read the announcements if student is not present?  Principal:  The secretary is busy working on many different things at the time announcements are read. If it is longer than 1 minute before the student starts, we won’t read them. Announcements need to be short and can only be repeated three times. We need to keep the time to read announcements down to two minutes! |
| We have a group of students who are abusing their senior study halls and wandering around the school. My belief is that they should either be in the library or off campus. My suggestion would be to have a two strike rule. If they are hanging in the halls, grab their name. If they are caught here hanging in the halls twice, they lose the senior study hall and have to take a real study hall or a class. | Pac:  We want students in the library, using the library. Students need to get off campus when in senior study hall.  Principal:  Every staff member needs to be universal in this. If you see seniors in the hallways, ask them if they are on a senior study hall and if they are, ask them to leave the building.  PAC:  There are people in the building during class time that shouldn’t be there. Some feel we need cameras.  Principal:  Cameras were included in the facilities plan. |
| *Voting for senior projects-Voting in front of others makes some feel intimidated/bullied. Is there a way for it to be private?* |  |
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| Comments: |  |
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